UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/PRST/1995/12
17 March 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3509th meeting of the Security Council, held on 17 March 1995, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Georgia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council welcomes the interim report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Republic of Georgia (S/1995/181). The Council also welcomes the recent efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy which enjoy the Council's full support.

"The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia and calls upon the parties to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the conflict, including on the political status of Abkhazia.

"The Security Council notes that there has been little overall progress in achieving a comprehensive political settlement and that a stalemate exists with respect to the return of refugees and displaced persons.

"The Security Council takes note of the movement which has occurred in the political talks which resumed in Geneva from 7 to 9 February 1995 and calls upon the parties to exert determined efforts towards achieving substantive progress during the next round of talks.

"The Security Council notes with concern that despite the efforts of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and the CIS peace-keeping force, the security situation, in the Gali region in particular, has deteriorated, causing great difficulty in the delivery of humanitarian supplies. The Council also notes with concern that reports of human rights abuses, largely against the Georgian population, have become more frequent. The Council calls upon the parties to provide a secure environment, inter alia, to provide security for returning refugees and displaced persons and to ensure that international relief supplies can be delivered safely.

"The Security Council is deeply concerned about the lack of progress regarding the return of refugees and displaced persons. The Council deplores the continued obstruction on this issue displayed by the Abkhaz authorities and, in particular, the position taken by those authorities in the recent meeting of the Quadripartite Commission in Moscow. The Council expects the parties to implement fully their obligations under the Quadripartite Agreement on voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons (S/1994/397, annex II). The Council urges the Abkhaz authorities to agree to a timetable on the basis of that proposed by UNHCR. The Council notes that cooperation between UNOMIG and UNHCR is critical to the safe and orderly return of refugees and displaced persons.

"The Security Council, while welcoming the pledge that has been announced to the voluntary fund in support of the implementation of the Agreement on a Cease-fire and Separation of Forces, notes the lack of contributions to this fund and reiterates its encouragement to Member States to make contributions to the voluntary fund in support of the implementation of the Agreement on a Cease-fire and Separation of Forces and/or for humanitarian aspects including demining, as specified by the donors. The Council also welcomes all other relevant humanitarian contributions of Member States.

"The Security Council welcomes the steps taken by UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping force aimed at improving conditions for the safe and orderly return of refugees and displaced persons. The Council notes UNOMIG's increased patrolling and looks forward to further information on intensification of its activities within its mandate. The Council also welcomes the strengthening of cooperation between UNOMIG and the OSCE representatives in Georgia.

"The Security Council agrees with the observation of the Secretary-General that, with patience and perseverance, solutions can be found to the situation in Abkhazia, Republic of Georgia. The Council underlines that without progress in this direction it will not be possible to maintain the support of the international community.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."